AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

(IN FORMAT COMPLIANT WITH THE REVISED 37 CFR 1.121)

1.   (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An apparatus configured to extract in-band information from a current packet or skip extraction of said in-band information and perform a look ahead operation to a predetermined location in a next packet, wherein said apparatus is configured to switch between said extraction of said in-band information and skipping said extraction.

2.   (ORIGINAL) The apparatus according to claim 1, further configured to switch from generating one or more unicast queue addresses to generating one or more multicast queue addresses.

3.   (ORIGINAL) The apparatus according to claim 1, further configured to switch from generating one or more multicast queue addresses to generating one or more unicast queue addresses.

4.   (ORIGINAL) The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

        a pointer to address generator logic circuit;

        a head pointer logic circuit; and

        a multicast head pointer logic circuit.

5. (ORIGINAL) The apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said head pointer logic circuit is configured to generate one or more unicast addresses.

6. (ORIGINAL) The apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said head pointer logic circuit is further configured to store one or more unicast addresses.

7. (ORIGINAL) The apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said head pointer logic circuit is configured as a pipeline stage for said in-band information.

8. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said multicast head pointer logic circuit generates one or more multicast addresses.

9. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said multicast head pointer logic circuit is further configured to store one or more multicast addresses.

10. (ORIGINAL) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said in-band information comprises unicast information.

11.   (ORIGINAL) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said in-band information comprises multicast information.

12.   (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An apparatus comprising:

means for extracting in-band information from a current packet;

means for skipping extraction of said in-band information;

means for performing a look ahead operation to a predetermined location in a next packet; and

means for switching between said means for extracting said in-band information from said current packet and said means for skipping said extraction.

13.   (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method for extracting in-band information comprising the steps of:

(A)   extracting said in-band information from a current packet;

(B)   skipping extraction of said in-band information;

(C)   performing a look ahead operation to a predetermined location in a next packet; and

(D)   switching between steps (A) and (B).

14. (ORIGINAL) The method according to claim 13, wherein step (A) further comprises generating and storing one or more unicast addresses.

15. (ORIGINAL) The method according to claim 13, wherein step (A) further comprises generating and storing one or more multicast addresses.

16. (ORIGINAL) The method according to claim 13, further comprising the step of:

(C) providing a pipeline register stage for said in-band information.

17. (ORIGINAL) The method according to claim 13, wherein said in-band information comprises unicast information.

18. (ORIGINAL) The method according to claim 13, wherein said in-band information comprises multicast information.

Please add the following new claims:

19. (NEW) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said predetermined location in said next packet is a predetermined distance from a start of packet (SOP) of said next packet.

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20.   (NEW) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said predetermined location in said next packet comprises a port information location of said next packet.